

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested. Claims 17-20 and 22-29 remain for consideration.

The Examiner rejected the Claims 17-29 under the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner took the position that the claims contained subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to someone skilled in the art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed inventions. Particularly the Examiner pointed to the limitation “and pressed together.” Claim 17 has been amended in a sincere effort to overcome this rejection. Claim 17 now recites a coupling mechanism to selectively couple said sprocketed wheels so that when coupled said sprocketed wheels rotate together. The sprocketed wheels are connected fixedly and non-rotationally to the shaft so that in an uncoupled state each individual sprocketed wheel can rotate relative to the others and to the shaft. In the specification on page 6, clearly recites a coupling mechanism to accomplish this function in such a way as to reasonably convey to one of ordinary skill in the art. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 17 now obviates the rejection set forth in paragraph 2 of the Official Action.

In paragraph 4 of the Official Action, the Examiner rejected to Claims 17-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner pointed out the limitation “the conveyor line.” Claim 17 has now been amended to delete the word “the” and add the word “each” so that it is now definite.

The Examiner also pointed out the limitation “and pressed together” and this limitation has now been deleted.

Claim 21 was similarly rejected and the Examiner pointed out that, as written, Claim 21 is unclear since it appears to recite structure already positively recited in claim 17. Claim 21 has been cancelled so that this rejection is also obviated.

The Examiner also rejected Claims 17-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Greenwell et al. (US 5,337,887). Greenwell et al. fails to teach, suggest or disclose in any manner a conveyer system with a plurality of conveyor chains guided over sprocketed wheels which are mounted and coupled together by a coupling mechanism to selectively couple the sprocketed wheels to that when

coupled the sprocketed wheels rotate together and when uncoupled each individual sprocketed wheels rotates relative to the others and the shaft. Accordingly, it is believed that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) cannot be maintained.

The Examiner also rejected Claims 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greenwell et al. in view of Malhiot (US 2,358,292). As noted above with respect to the rejection of Claims 17-21, 24, Greenwell et al. fails to teach a significant feature of the claimed invention which is positively recited in newly amended Claim 17. That is the selective coupling of the sprocketed wheels. Malhiot fails to rectify this deficiency in Greenwell et al. so that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) cannot be maintained.

The Examiner also rejected Claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable under Greenwell et al. in view of Middleburg et al. (US 5,806,659). As noted above, Greenwell et al. fails to teach or suggest the significant feature of the invention and this deficiency is not rectified by Middleburg et al.

The Examiner indicated that Claims 25-29 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Although it is believed that the rejection has been overcome, applicant at this juncture believes all of the claims are allowable. The indication of allowability of the subject matter of claims 25-29 is noted.

Accordingly in view of the above amendments and remarks favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

Applicant requests a one-month extension of time to respond to up to and including February 5, 2004. Our check in the amount of \$110.00 is enclosed to cover the fee associated with the extension of time.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit any overpayments or charge any insufficient fees associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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